



## National Disabled Veterans *Winter Sports Clinic*

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### History of the Clinic

Celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> year in 2011, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic started in 1987 with roughly 90 Veterans who were eager to learn to ski using adaptive ski equipment, and 20 staff members who helped them participate in a variety of other adaptive activities and workshops. The idea for the Clinic originated in the early 1980s when Sandy Trombetta, founder and director of the Clinic, began bringing VA patients to a nearby mountain resort to participate in disabled ski programs. As a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, he recognized the physical and mental healing that skiing and other winter sports can provide to Veterans with disabilities.

The popularity of the program became apparent by the steady climb in its participant base, and in 1991, the Disabled American Veterans became a co-sponsor of the event. This milestone allowed the Clinic to grow and become the jewel in the crown of disabled sports that it is today. In 2010, 353 participants attended from across the country, along with 200 certified disabled ski instructors and several members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team. Several participants who learned to ski at the Clinic are now members of the U.S. team.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic attracts Veterans from across the country to participate in this annual learn-to-ski clinic for disabled Veterans. Ensuring that Veterans receive world-class healthcare and rehabilitation is a primary goal of VA and DAV; the Winter Sport Clinic complements those efforts by providing opportunities for self-development and challenge through sports and leisure activities. The Clinic proves that having a disability need not be an obstacle to an active, rewarding life.

Veterans learn Alpine and Nordic skiing and are introduced to a variety of other activities and sports such as rock climbing, scuba diving, trap shooting, curling, snowmobiling and sled hockey. Again this year, U.S. Secret Service instructors will teach self-defense to participants who are in wheelchairs or are visually impaired.

Participation is open to male and female U.S. military service veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities. Participants include veterans from all eras, from WW II right up to and including veterans from the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

***Number of Veterans Participating in the  
National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic -- 1987- 2010***

<b>Year</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
1987	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	90
1988	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	106
1989	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	151
1990	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	171
1991	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	186
1992	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	226
1993	Crested Butte, Colo.	238
1994	Crested Butte, Colo.	256
1995	Crested Butte, Colo.	279
1996	Crested Butte, Colo.	287
1997	Crested Butte, Colo.	294
1998	Crested Butte, Colo.	313
1999	Crested Butte, Colo.	303
2000	Crested Butte, Colo.	331
2001	Snowmass Village, Colo.	351
2002	Snowmass Village, Colo.	350
2003	Snowmass Village, Colo.	305
2004	Snowmass Village, Colo.	325
2005	Snowmass Village, Colo.	323
2006	Snowmass Village, Colo.	340
2007	Snowmass Village, Colo.	370
2008	Snowmass Village, Colo.	393
2009	Snowmass Village, Colo.	370
2010	Snowmass Village, Colo.	353